



Alaska District Community Relations Update

From the US Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska Native Liaison Office

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This update is a great tool for the Alaska District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It gives us a better understanding of Alaska Native issues and how we can become better educated in communicating with Tribes. Moreover, it gives us a platform to address rural Alaskan community needs and challenges. Please let us know of any community success stories we may be missing by contacting Johnny Duplantis at (907) 753-2829 or his assistant Amanda Johnson at (907) 753-5795. We hope that you find these pieces informative and useful in your dealings with the COE, Alaska District.

Department of Defense American Indian and Alaska Native Policy Summary

The following principles establish the Department of Defense's (DoD) American Indian and Alaska Native Policy for interacting and working with federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native governments (herein referred to as "tribes"). The principles are based on tribal input, federal policy, treaties, and federal statutes. It is through these policies that DoD shows support to tribal self-governance and Government-to-Government relations between the federal government and tribes. Although the principles are intended to provide general guidance on issues affecting tribes, we do take into consideration the unique qualities of individual tribes in our daily work. We recognize the importance of increasing understanding and addressing tribal concerns, past, present, and future. We also do our best to address all concerns prior to reaching decisions on matters that may have the potential to significantly affect protect tribal resources, tribal rights, or Indian lands.

Trust Responsibilities

DoD will meet its trust responsibilities under the Federal Trust doctrine, treaties, Executive Orders, agreements, statutes, and other obligations.

Government-to-Government Relations

DoD will build stable and enduring Government-to-Government relationships with tribes by encouraging communication and information exchange, and by removing regulatory impediments to working with tribal governments. DoD will consult with tribes to assess the effect of proposed DoD actions that may have the potential to significantly affect protected tribal resources, tribal rights, and Indian lands before decisions are made.

Consultation

DoD will engage in meaningful consultation with tribes based on its recognition of the United States' unique relationship with tribes. DoD will provide tribes timely notice before it takes any action affecting them; consult with each tribe in good faith; and develop and maintain effective communication, coordination, and cooperation with tribes.

Natural Cultural Resources Protection

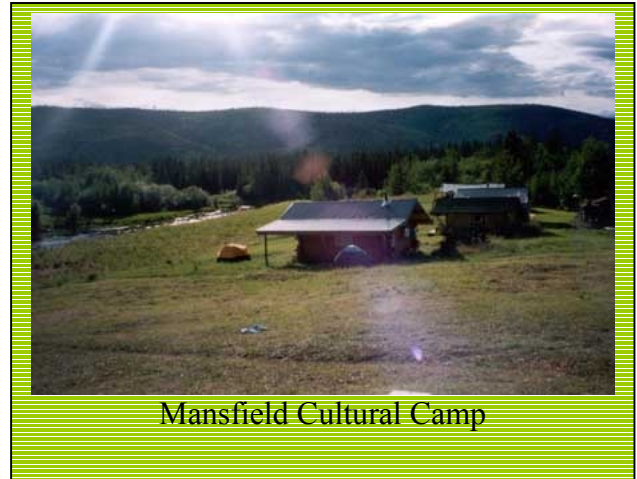
DoD will respect the importance of natural resources and traditional religious and cultural sites. It will manage its lands to conserve protected tribal resources; to accommodate tribal access to sacred and off-reservation treaty sites located on military installations; and to develop procedures to protect information regarding tribal trust resources.

If there is a DoD project that may have a significant impact upon your Tribe's resources, please contact Johnny Duplantis, the Alaska Native Liaison immediately at (907) 753-2829.

Outreach in Tanacross

Representatives from USACE, Alaska District traveled to Tanacross, Alaska (near Tok) for meetings held by the Tanacross Village Council from June 25th through June 28th, 2002. Attendees included Deputy District Commander LTC Gingras, Alaska Native Liaison Johnny Duplantis, and Alaska Native Liaison Assistant Amanda Johnson. The trip served a variety of purposes: 1) outreach; 2) village tour; 3) building pre-fabrication site visit; and, 4) the Dene' Restoration Steering Committee (see article on page 3).

On June 26th, 2002 we met at the Tanacross Village Council office for a brief meeting. Jerry Isaac, President and CEO of Dihthaad Global Services (DGS), LLC and the Chief of Tanacross Village, expressed economic concerns to LTC Gingras. Isaac is very concerned for the people of his village and their standard of living. We were informed that DGS has recently acquired the



following U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Certifications: 8(a), Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB), Native American Owned and Tribally owned, Historically Under-utilized Business Zone (HUBZone), Economically Disadvantaged Woman-Owned Small Business (WOB). They are also currently compiling a database of qualified and available labor workforce within the tribe. Isaac provided LTC Gingras with a paper copy of the database.

We then went on to a tour of the village, a tour of Tanacross Airfield, a site visit of the old Tok School (which DGS is making into a building pre-fabrication facility), and a tour of the Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline, Tok Terminal.

That evening, LTC Gingras headed back to Anchorage while Duplantis and Johnson were invited to the Mansfield Cultural Camp (approximately 1 hour boat ride from Tanacross). This camp was offered to the local community from June 24 – 27, 2002 and provided villagers with workshops available in Alaska Native language, beading, tanning, plant identification, snaring, hiking, birch bark basket making, woodworking, health and safety, environmental classes, singing and dancing. By the time we arrived people were relaxing and preparing dinner. We welcomed the opportunity to talk with a respected elder, ate dinner with the camp, and returned to Tanacross.

Dene' Restoration Steering Committee

Four USACE, Alaska District employees attended the Dene' Restoration Steering Committee hosted by the Native Village of Tanacross on June 27th and June 28th. District representatives were Alaska Native Liaison Johnny Duplantis, Alaska Native Liaison Assistant Amanda Johnson, Project Manager Shah Alam, and Project Manager Rich Jackson.

The Dene' Restoration Steering Committee transpired from the Cross-Cultural Steering Committee, which was started in 1998. Many federal agency employees, various tribal representatives, and one state employee attended the meetings. Approximately 30 people were present.

Since the steering committee has very recently changed its name and objectives, much of the meetings were focused on developing a new mission and roles for the future. The discussions were led by Steve Howdeshell, Director of the Tribal Environmental Restoration Program at Tanana Chiefs Conference Inc, (TCC). He presented TCC's Strategic Project Implementation Plan (SPIP) FY 02 - FY 07 at length. This is based on a continuing cooperative agreement between TCC and the Department of Defense (DoD). The SPIP considers how to clean up land in a manner that takes Native rights, values, and concerns into consideration. The plan considers three corridors of transportation and military impact concentration: 1) The Alaska Highway; 2) The Yukon River; and, 3) The Kuskokwim River. These areas are natural routes used by the military to

transport its supplies and site installations and have impacted many Tribes in Interior Alaska.

Duplantis and Johnson made many contacts throughout the trip, including an important contact with Ben Saylor, Chief of Healy Lake Village. Saylor expressed his desire for formal Government-to-Government meetings with USACE, Alaska District regarding environmental clean-up in their area. We began the planning process for that meeting at an informal lunch on June 28th, 2002 and plan to visit Healy Lake in August.

After the lunch we departed Tok for Anchorage.

List of Upcoming Events

August

- 18-21 Alaska Native Fish, Wildlife, Habitat and Environment Summit Anchorage
- 21 Government-to-Government at Healy Lake
- 22 We The People March—Anchorage

September

- 9-11 Multi-agency Government-to-Government at Tanana

October

- 2-3 Alaska Native Overview Training/DOI University Learning Center In Anchorage
- 21-23 Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Youth and Elders' Conference at Egan Center--Anchorage
- 24- 26 AFN Convention at Egan Center
- 28-30 Alaska Inter-Tribal Council Convention in Anchorage

November

- 10-15 NCAI 59th Annual Session hosted at the Town and Country Resort in San Diego, California

Native American Lands Environmental Mitigation Program (NALEMP)

To further its national security mission, the Department of Defense (DoD) conducts operational and training activities throughout the country. Dating back to World War II, some of these activities have had long-lasting environmental effects on our nation's lands, including Indian lands and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)-conveyed properties. DoD's environmental programs have made progress in addressing many impacts on Indian lands; however, many impacts remain.

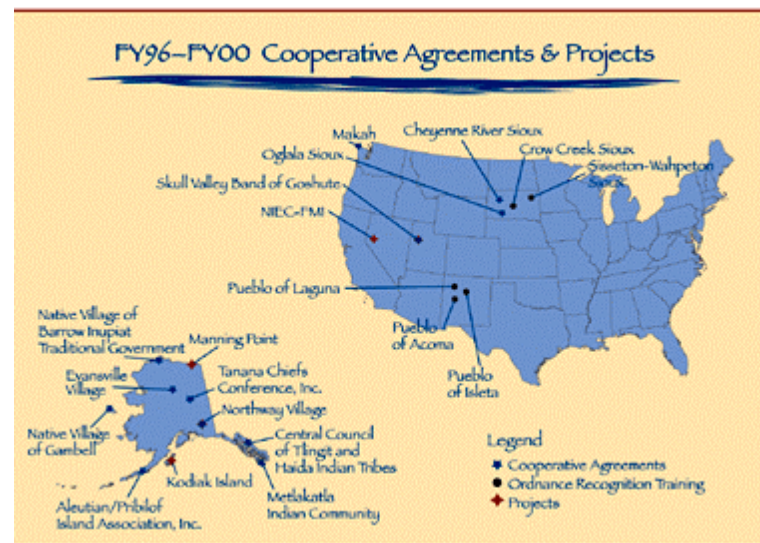
Under its federal Indian trust responsibility, DoD understands that it has an obligation to address these issues. In recognition of DoD's trust responsibility and the need to address environmental impacts unique to tribes, Congress has, each year since 1993, inserted a provision in the DoD Appropriations Act requiring DoD to devote a specified amount of funds annually to mitigate environmental impacts to Indian lands. In 1996, DoD created the Native American Lands Environmental Mitigation Program (NALEMP).

Through NALEMP, DoD consults with tribal governments to address these impacts from past DoD activities while being responsive and sensitive to tribal needs and cultural concerns. These partnerships allow tribes to become effective participants in DoD programs and to more successfully coordinate their own environmental and resource management activities.

NALEMP funds are used to: document environmental damage to Indian lands; provide administrative support; gather information; provide training and technical assistance; develop a prioritization system for mitigation; and calculate cost-to-complete estimates for mitigation projects. From Fiscal Year 1996 through Fiscal Year 2000 (below), almost 85 percent of the annual funding supported mitigation activities—such as field projects, Cooperative Agreements, technology demonstrations, and site assessments. The remaining funding has helped DoD develop the American Indian and Alaska Native Policy, produce cultural sensitivity training, develop a system to maintain site information and track mitigation efforts, determine a prioritization system, and conduct outreach.

Projects are selected for NALEMP from the Native American Environmental Tracking System (NAETS). Suspected military impacts on Native-owned lands can be reported to NAETS by accessing DoD's internet website at: <https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/Native/native.html>

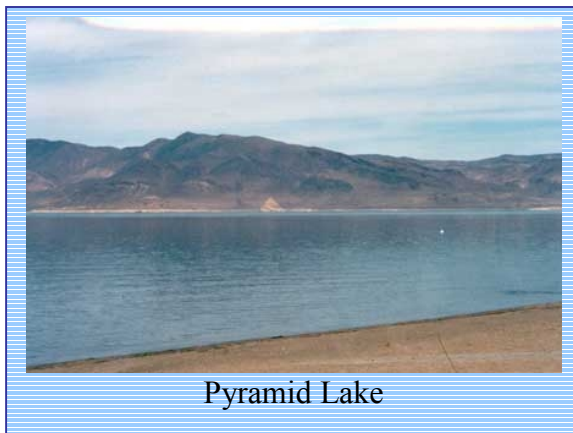
If your tribe is interested in the NALEMP program, please contact Corps of Engineers Program Manager Suzanne Beauchamp at (907) 753-5559.



The National Tribal Environmental Council (NTEC)

The National Tribal Environmental Council (NTEC) held its 9th National Conference: *Promises Yet to Be Honored* in Reno/Sparks, Nevada from June 2nd – June 4th. Hosted by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, the goal of the conference was to provide an interactive format in which participants could listen to and discuss key environmental topics and focus on strategies to build and implement tribal programs. Conference attendees were of various different backgrounds including Lower 48 tribal members, Alaska Native tribal members, federal employees, and various agencies. Many different viewpoints were voiced throughout the conference.

There were a variety of plenary and breakout sessions throughout the conference. The most interesting were the breakout sessions on Tribal Environmental Health. These sessions included presentation and discussion on issues such as waste management, risk assessment, the NTEC Superfund Working Group, the Tribal Science Council (TSC), and subsistence living.



National Tribal Conference on Environmental Management

The 6th National Tribal Conference on Environmental Management from June 4th – June 7th was also held in Reno/Sparks, Nevada and was also hosted by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. The two conferences were purposely co-located to save time and money for tribal members. I found the National Tribal Conference on Environmental Management to be more organized and better attended than the NTEC conference. It was nicely kicked off with a welcoming barbeque at the Pyramid Lake Marina, Sutcliffe, Nevada.

There were many attention-grabbing presentations given including a panel led by Johnny Duplantis entitled “Establishing Government to Government with the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)”. Panel members discussed the following topics: the agency’s tribal policy and what tribes need to know to get involved in DoD programs; the latest tribal related news from Headquarters and HQ initiatives in Indian Country; water related resource problems and the Civil Works Program; the desk guide created by the Northwest Division for program managers, project managers, supervisors and anyone in that division working with tribes; and finally, an Alaska Report Briefing was given.

The conferences were both enjoyable and informative, making for a very successful trip.

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